THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE

THOMAS TIPLADY

The Influence of the Bible

By THOMAS TIPLADY

The Influence of the Bible
On History, Literature and Oratory . . $1.00

Mr. Tiplady shows how the Scriptures constitute the master interpreter of human nature exhibiting a marvelous insight into character. Altogether, it is a volume of an unusually readable and deeply interesting sort.

Social Christianity in the New Era
Second Edition $1.25

"But just as sure as the water wears away the granite so shall such books as this reshape and remould the world and bring in a new and better social order."—*Boston Transcript.*

The Soul of the Soldier
Echoes from the Western Front. With Frontispiece. Second Edition . . . $1.25

"Filled with the love of his soldiers and the deep sense of their bravery and great achievement. Throughout one feels Mr. Tiplady's actual closeness to the front. A brave and human collection of pictures from the war."
—*New York Times Book Review.*

The Cross at the Front
Fragments from the Trenches. With Frontispiece. Eighth Edition . . . $1.25

"'Vivid' is too dim a word to express the living pictures which this chaplain has seen in France. Some of the chapters are among the finest pieces of of pathos we have read anywhere. Read the book and you will be a better man for all your tasks."
—*Chicago Standard.*

The Influence of the Bible

On History, Literature, and Oratory

By
THOMAS TIPLADY
Author of "The Cross at the Front."

NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

"The Bible thoroughly known is a literature of itself—the rarest and the richest in all departments of thought or imagination which exists."—James Anthony Froude, the historian.

"I loved and valued the Bible, for almost to it alone I owed my moral culture."—Goethe.

"In regard to the Great Book, I have only to say it is the best gift which God has ever given to man."—Abraham Lincoln.

PREFACE

MANY years ago a traveler found a Kaffir boy playing at marbles with a stone which looked very ordinary, until he took it in his hand and carefully examined it. After examination he declared the stone to be a diamond, and under the ground where the Kaffir boy played there are now the famous Kimberley mines. For centuries men had walked over Kimberley's dusty surface without suspecting their nearness to mines of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. In like manner Europe, for ages, had in its midst a book of truth and beauty unequalled in literature, but to the mass of men it was a closed mine. Its discovery and reopening by Erasmus and Luther caused an infinitely greater sensation than the opening of the Kimberley mines, and has enriched all nations. The sensation, however, is now over, so far as the Western nations are concerned, and familiarity is in danger of breeding con-

tempt. The modest black binding of the Bible looks as uninteresting as the shafts of a diamond mine; and people are in danger of passing by it instead of going down into its depths for the enrichment of their minds and hearts. It is to draw the attention of gifted young men to the Bible as the supreme guide to leadership in public life, literature, and oratory, that I have written this little book. To prove my points, I have found it necessary to call upon historians, authors, and orators to bear witness. The sources from which I have quoted are, as a rule, indicated in the text; and I wish to thank the authors and publishers most sincerely. I trust that the quotations will so whet the appetites of my readers that they will want more, and will therefore get the books of the authors mentioned, so that they may browse at their leisure and to their hearts' content.

T. T.

Contents

I

THE BOOK OF BOOKS

THE Bible was not written by an individual. It was written by a race. It is not a wayside well built over a single spring, but a mighty river into which a million springs have poured their waters. In the Bible we have not one man's experience of God, but a whole people's. It covers not the brief span of an individual's life, but the thousands of years through which a race lives. It records the spiritual experience not of a chosen man but of a chosen people. The Bible holds the life blood of the Jewish race. It is a living thing, full of vitality and regenerating power. In it all that God meant to the Jewish people in their individual, social, and national life is distilled, preserved, and revealed to mankind. It

enshrines the soul of a people and is the Hebrews' priceless legacy to the world.

The Legacies of Three Civilizations

The Greeks taught the world Art and the love of beauty: the Romans taught it Law and ordered Government; but the Jews taught it Religion and Righteousness. Each of these ancient civilizations left mankind a priceless heritage, but the greatest of these gifts was the legacy of the Hebrews. The Jewish people were the "God-carrying people," as the Russians loved to call themselves. They were receivers of God and revealers of Him. They had a peculiar sensitiveness towards God. Sensitive as the negative plate of a camera, they received the impress of God and revealed it to the world through the medium of the Bible. In the fullness of time there came to this people a full revelation of God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among them and they beheld His Glory. The record of this incarnation of the Son of God and many of the words of Jesus are preserved in this wonderful book. Whatever truth the Holy Spirit may yet reveal to mankind, the

Bible can never be dispensed with nor superseded. The living Christ is more to men than the Bible, but we have His own authority for saying that the Bible is the text-book which the Holy Spirit will ever use in teaching men divine knowledge. The scholar will need the help of the Divine Teacher if he is to fathom the depths of the text-book; but a study of the ways of Providence will, I think, show that the Divine Teacher felt the need of such a text-book in teaching men, and co-operated with saintly men in its preparation. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

Inspiration Not Dictation

The word "moved" is a perfect expression of the meaning of "inspiration." When a poet has been deeply moved by his communion with Nature, the poem which springs to birth is not his alone. It is Nature speaking through him. The poet feels that something greater than himself has taken him in hand and is using him as a musician uses a violin. The poem grows

up within him while he lies in a passive and dreamy mood. So pronounced was this feeling in Blake that he took no credit to himself for his poems, but regarded himself merely as an instrument writing as he was inspired by a power not himself. The poet does not feel that he made his poem but that it was made in him. It is his own, and has all his characteristics, for it has soaked through his personality and taken the dye of his own mind, yet he does not feel that he created it. The poem is his and yet not his. It is something that entered into him, clothed itself in his characteristics, and passed out into the world. Each poem he writes bears his likeness, but he does not feel that it is entirely his. In like manner, I take it, holy men of old were "moved" while in communion with God. In passive tranced mood they came under the influence of the Holy Ghost and experienced a spiritual exaltation unknown to them in ordinary moments. In these high moments they spake as they were moved to speak. Their nature vibrated with a music touched to life by a heavenly hand. The music took its form and tone from them,

but was not in essence their own. Hence the confidence of their declaration, "Thus saith the Lord." Some writers were moved more deeply than others, and the same writer was probably moved more deeply at one time than at another. What they wrote was theirs and yet not theirs. It was human and yet divine. There is little likeness, except in essence, between the writings of David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, St. Matthew, St. John, and St. Paul. In every case the writings are characteristic of the personality. The individual note blends with the universal and the human with the divine. One cannot say where the human ends and the divine begins. We cannot define the boundaries, and this inability has often been a rock of offence to the intellectual pride of man and a cause of controversy both within the Church and without. As in the person of Christ, the human and divine are inextricably mingled. No man can mark where the one begins and the other ends. There are some things too mysterious for man to define and too profound for him to dogmatize about; and the inspiration of the Bible is one of them.

The Supreme Book of Power

Was it not because Christ was so supremely human that men came to realize that He was more than human? They first knew Him as "the Son of Man." Later they realized that He was the "Son of God." In like manner men passed from the human to the divine element in the Scriptures and declared the Bible to be the word of God. It is a mistake, I think, to demand from men a belief in the inspiration of the Bible until they have discovered for themselves the divine element in it. They should be permitted to grow slowly into belief by contact with the book's spiritual power. Many have turned away from the Bible because we have asked them to believe in its inspiration before they have felt its power. Men should go to the Bible without preconceptions as to its authority, and read it sympathetically as an ordinary book. When they have read deeply, and with understanding, they will realize that it has a range beyond the reach of unaided man. Delving into the human they will break through into the divine, and when they reach it their hearts will warm within

them, and they will know instinctively that it is God who has been talking to them by the way. It is this commingling of the human with the divine, this incarnation of the divine mind in the literature of the Jewish race, which gives the Bible its extraordinary power. Erasmus says in one of his letters to Colet, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, "I am rushing at full speed into sacred literature, and look at nothing which keeps me back from it. I hope now I have returned to France to put my affairs on a slightly better footing. This done, I shall sit down to Holy Scripture with my whole heart, and devote the rest of my life to it."

The Vision Splendid

The book enchanted him and gave him a new vision of life. "Compared with Christ," he says, "the best of men are but worms." "Erasmus," Froude says, "had undertaken to give the book to the whole world to read for itself the original Greek of the Epistles and Gospels, with a new Latin translation—to wake up the intelligence, to show that the words had a real sense, and were not mere sounds like

the dronings of a barrel-organ. It was finished at last, text and translation printed, and the living facts of Christianity, the persons of Christ and the Apostles, their history, their lives, their teaching were revealed to an astonished world. For the first time the laity were able to see, side by side, the Christianity which converted the world, and the Christianity of the Church with a Borgia pope, cardinal princes, ecclesiastical courts, and a mythology of lies. The effect was to be a spiritual earthquake. Never was volume more passionately devoured. A hundred thousand copies were soon sold in France alone. The fire spread, as it spread behind Samson's foxes in the Philistines' corn. The words of the Bible have been so long familiar to us that we can hardly realize what the effect must have been when the Gospel was brought out fresh and visible before the astonished eyes of mankind." The publication of the New Testament by Erasmus began the Reformation of Europe—that mighty uprising of intellectual and spiritual forces which changed the course of history. About the same time, a poor monk in an Augustinian

convent found, in the library, "a copy of the New Testament lying dusty on the shelves. He studied it, digested it, discovered the extraordinary contrast between the Christianity which was taught in the Gospels and Epistles and the Christianity of the monasteries."

The Course of History Changed

The book made Luther a new man and sent him out to make a new world. "Suddenly," says Froude, "as a bolt out of the blue, there came a flash of lightning, which set the world on fire. A figure now steps out upon the scene which has made a deeper mark on the history of mankind than any one individual man has ever left, except Mahomet." With the Bible for a torch, Luther set the world on fire and burned up much of its dross and superstition. The New Testament of Erasmus and the Gospel preaching of Luther set in motion spiritual forces that no human power could stay or control. In the height of this upheaval, Luther resolved to translate the Bible into the common tongue of Germany, so that all his countrymen might read it for themselves. Froude says:

"The names of Luther and Erasmus were about to be coupled closer than ever by their joint service to mankind. Erasmus had edited the Greek New Testament and made a new translation. Luther, in the castle of Wartburg, was translating it into vernacular German, with the Old Testament to follow. Together, these two men had made accessible the rock stronger than the rock of Peter, on which the faith of mankind was to be rebuilt." Such is the verdict of the historian on the effect of the rediscovery of the Bible. No other book has ever so completely changed the course of human destiny. In light and power the Bible stands by itself. It borrows from none and gives to all. Where it shines, life and beauty spring to birth. It is the supreme book of power.

II

THE BIBLE AS A MEANS OF CULTURE

HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE, who died recently, was assistant editor of *The Outlook.* Three of his books—*Books and Culture, Essays on Nature and Culture,* and *Shakespeare, Poet, Dramatist, and Man*—are among my leading favorites. I would rather go barefoot for a week than part with any of them, for they are among the most illuminating books on life and literature that I have read. Others of his are: *My Study Fire* (two series), *Under the Trees and Elsewhere, Short Studies in Literature,* and *Essays in Literary Interpretation.* In a chapter—"The Books of Life"—he says: "The books of power, as distinguished from the books of knowledge, include the original, creative, first-hand books in all literatures, and consti-

tute, in the last analysis, a comparatively small group, with which any student can thoroughly familiarize himself. . . . If it be true, as many believe, that the fundamental process of the universe, so far as we can understand it, is not intellectual but vital, it follows that the deepest things which men have learned have come to them not as the result of processes of thought, but as the result of the process of living. . . . Every leading race has its characteristic thought concerning its own nature, its relation to the world, and the character and quality of life. These various fundamental conceptions have shaped all definite thinking, and have very largely moulded race character, and, therefore, determined race destiny.

Hebrew, Greek, and Roman

"The Hebrew, the Greek, and the Roman conceptions of life constitute not only the key to the diverse histories of the leaders of ancient civilization, but also their most vital contribution to civilization. These conceptions were not definitely thought out; they were worked out. They were the result of the contact of

these different peoples with Nature, with the circumstances of their own time, and with those universal experiences which fall to the lot of all men, and which are, in the long run, the prime sources and instruments of human education. . . . The man who would get the ripest culture from books ought to read many, but there are a few books which he must read; among them, first and foremost, are the Bible, and the works of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe. These are the supreme books of life as distinguished from the books of knowledge and skill. They hold their places because they combine in the highest degree vitality, truth, power, and beauty. They are the central reservoirs into which the rivulets of individual experience over a vast surface have been gathered; they are the most complete revelations of what life has brought and has been to the leading races; they bring us into contact with the heart and soul of humanity. They not only convey information, and, rightly used, impart discipline, but they transmit life. There is a vitality in them which passes on into the nature which is open to receive it.

They have again and again inspired intellectual movements on a wide scale, as they are constantly recreating individual ideals and aims.

Agreement About the Life-giving Power of the Bible

"Whatever view may be held of the authority of the Bible, it is agreed that its power as literature has been incalculable by reason of the depth of life which it sounds and the range of life which it compasses. There is power enough in it to revive a decaying age or give a new date and a fresh impulse to a race which has parted with its creative energy. The reappearance of the New Testament in Greek, after the long reign of the Vulgate, contributed mightily to that renewal and revival of life which we call the Reformation; while its translation into the modern languages liberated a moral and intellectual force of which no adequate measurement can be made. In like manner, though in lesser degree, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* the *Divine Comedy,* the plays of Shakespeare, and *Faust* have set new movements in motion, and have enriched

and enlarged the lives of races. With these books of life every man ought to hold the most intimate relationship; they are not to be read once and put on the upper shelves; they are to be always at hand. Whoever knows them in a real sense knows life, humanity, art, and himself."

That is what Mabie, a leading literary critic of our time, says about the Bible as a means of culture. He places it "first and foremost" amongst the supreme books of the world. "There is power enough in it to revive a decaying age or give a new date and a fresh impulse to a race which has parted with its creative energy." The England of to-day has parted with its creative moral energy. That is what lies at the root of all our discontent and failure. And every leader of men, whether Conservative, Liberal, or Socialist, knows it in his lucid moments when he sits watching the faces in the hearth fire.

The Fallacy of Inevitable Progress

The discovery of evolution as a process of nature is responsible, I suppose, for

the present-day fallacy that human nature must inevitably progress with the centuries from lower to higher types of personality and life. It is an application of natural law to the spiritual world which forgets fundamental differences. In the natural world God is not dealing with personality, yet, even there, rivers do not always take the nearest way to the sea, but sometimes turn back on themselves. In human life, however, personality is the central fact, and the theory of inevitable human progress is, in reality, a denial of personality in man—and, more or less, in God, for it imagines God as a mighty irresistible force overriding man's power of choice, and driving him, willy-nilly, to a predestined end as a river is driven to the sea. If man is a personality, he has the power of choice. If he has the power of choice he may choose either good or evil. If he wishes, he may say to evil, "Be thou my good," and resist the divine will. Hence the Bible begins with man in a beautiful garden where he possesses everything that heart could wish. In this perfect condition he is tempted of the devil, and he chooses, for the time being

at any rate, evil as more to be desired than good. He is a personality, not a machine. The last chapter of the Bible ends on the same note: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." From the beginning of the Bible to the end there is no overriding of the prerogatives of personality. Isaiah, whose religious interpretation of history is unequalled, when asked, "Watchman, what of the night?" replies, "The morning cometh, and also the night." Day and night alternate. There is ebb and flow, progress and "the putting back of the clock." Jesus declares, in no uncertain voice, that God will "avenge his own elect." "Nevertheless," He asks, "when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" And He leaves the question unanswered. He knows what God will do; but what will man choose to do? In Christ's picture of the final judgment of the world, men are divided on His right hand and on His left. They are sheep and goats, righteous and unrighteous, and

they go different ways to different destinies. There is no suggestion here of an "inevitable progress" of humanity. Man is left free to choose, and some prefer darkness to light. The Bible throughout pictures God as wrestling with the soul of man as He wrestled with Jacob. With Jacob God won, but with Judas Jesus lost.

The Rise and Fall of Empires

The issues of the future are uncertain. Empires rise and fall. Races progress or deteriorate. The English-speaking race has progressed during the last two thousand years, but the Greeks and Romans have degenerated in the same period. And neither the progress of the first nor the degeneracy of the others was inevitable. It was due to moral causes, and all morality rests on choice. If culture, for such all true progress must be, were a matter of mechanical invention, it would perhaps be safe to prophesy an inevitable development for mankind; but culture is an affair of the spirit. A man is not cultured because he rides in a motor car instead of on, or behind, a horse. He is simply comfortable. Homer had neither

a horse nor a motor car, but he was more cultured than any man of our time. An Atlantic liner is not a sign of the progress of culture, it is merely a sign of the development of comfort; and comfort is more the result of wealth than of culture. In fact, the men who sailed the Atlantic in the old sailing vessels derived more culture from their voyages than people do to-day who cross over in the *Mauretania,* for they were brought into contact with the mighty forces of nature. They battled with storms and faced death amid the loneliness of the high seas. Their wrestling with nature developed their souls. The modern liner has robbed the sea of its glory and terror, and a voyage to-day enlarges the experience and cultivates the soul as little, almost, as a week spent in a city hotel. It is the fishermen on our coasts who now derive most culture from the sea. A train is not a symbol of culture. It is merely a symbol of luxury and speed.

Culture: Ancient and Modern

The ancient Greeks had no trains, telephones, steamships, motor cars, or aero-

planes, but where to-day is there a race so cultured? The modern Greeks with all their trains and motor cars are not worthy to carry the sandals of the Greeks who chiselled La Venus de Milo and wrote the *Odyssey*. Sir Walter Scott never saw a typewriter, nor Burns a motor car, but where are the Scotsmen of to-day who have reached the same degree of culture? Dante, St. Francis of Assisi, Raphael, and Michael Angelo never heard of a train or aeroplane, but where to-day are their equals in the art of living? With all our material inventions, can we write poetry like Shakespeare, paint pictures like Rembrandt, or chisel like the ancient Greeks? Our inventions pamper the body, but do they enlarge the mind and elevate the spirit? Are our souls greater than the souls which lived centuries ago? England is infinitely richer in material wealth than in the days of old, but is it richer in spirit than when Cromwell, Milton, and Bunyan were alive; or when Shakespeare, Raleigh, Drake, and Spenser breathed English air? It is folly to suppose, merely because we can all read and write in these days, that we are

more cultured than in the days of Shakespeare, and have made progress. Reading and writing are nothing in themselves. The question is: What do we read and what do we write? The culture of the average man in Shakespeare's time is indicated by the fact that Shakespeare's great plays were written to meet the needs of his time, as our plays are written to meet the needs of our time. Shakespeare seems to have thought far less about publication than our modern playwrights, and to have troubled himself less about giving posterity a chance to read his works—the sonnets apart.

Running Away From Life

The Elizabethans sought experience. We try to escape experience. We have drugs for the body and cinemas and light novels for the mind. The majority of the people in Milton's days fed themselves on the Bible—the greatest literature in the world. The majority of the people to-day feed themselves on newspapers, magazines, and poor fiction. Our fathers won for us freedom of speech, and we have no use for our liberty—no great convictions

to utter. They won for us the right to worship God according to our own conscience, and the right is of no value to us, because, except for a minority, we have no desire to worship God either in one way or in another. Our fathers won for us civil rights and liberties, and forty out of every hundred of us do not even trouble to vote. Whether the white races will progress or degenerate depends on individual and national choice. Neither progress nor decay is inevitable. That we still have the capacity for greatness was shown not by the War but in the War. The fine qualities revealed during that terrible struggle, rightly guided and fostered, may lead on to an age more glorious than any in the past. To progress we must dare to live. We must stand up to life. We must seek, and not shun, experience. We must read, and live in the spirit of great books; for they hold all that was most vital in the great days of old. And of all great books, the common sense of mankind has declared the Bible to be the supreme guide in the art of living.

III

THE CREATIVE POWER OF THE BIBLE

I HAVE, in the previous chapter, quoted Hamilton Wright Mabie's judgment of the Bible, that "there is power enough in it to revive a decaying age or give a new date and a fresh impulse to a race which has parted with its creative energy." That this is not an exaggeration I want to prove from the history of England. The Bible actually did, three hundred years ago, "revive a decaying age and give a new date and a fresh impulse to our race when it had parted with its creative energy." Buy John Richard Green's standard work, the *Short History of the English People.* On the first page of the second half this is what you read: "No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years

which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. It was as yet the one English book which was familiar to every Englishman: it was read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm. When Bishop Bonner set up the first six Bibles in St. Paul's 'many well-disposed people used much to resort to the hearing thereof, especially when they could get any that had an audible voice to read to them. One John Porter used sometimes to be occupied in that goodly exercise to the edifying of himself as well as others. This Porter was a fresh young man and of a big stature; and great multitudes would resort thither to hear him, because he could read well and had an audible voice.'

Popularity of the Bible

"The popularity of the Bible was owing to other causes besides that of religion. The whole prose literature of England,

save the forgotten tracts of Wyclif, has grown up since the translation of the Scriptures by Tyndale and Coverdale. No history, no romance, no poetry, save the little known verse of Chaucer, existed for any practical purpose in the English tongue when the Bible was ordered to be set up in churches. Sunday after Sunday, day after day, the crowds that gathered round Bonner's Bibles in the nave of St. Paul's, or the family group that hung on the words of the Geneva Bible in the devotional exercises at home, were leavened with a new literature. Legends and annals, war song and psalm, State rolls and biographies, the mighty voices of prophets, the parables of evangelists, stories of mission journeys, of perils by the sea, and among the heathen, philosophic arguments, apocalyptic visions—all were flung broadcast over minds unoccupied for the most part by any rival learning. The disclosure of the stories of Greek literature had wrought the revolution of the Renaissance. The disclosure of the older mass of Hebrew literature wrought the revolution of the Reformation. But the one revolution was far

deeper and wider in its effects than the other. No version could transfer to another tongue the peculiar charm of language which gave their value to the authors of Greece and Rome.

"The Noblest Example of the English Tongue"

"Classical letters, therefore, remained in the possession of the learned, that is of the few; and among these, with the exception of Colet and More, or of the pedants who revived a Pagan worship in the gardens of the Florentine Academy, their direct influence was purely intellectual. But the tongue of the Hebrew, the idiom of Hellenistic Greek, lent themselves with a curious felicity to the purposes of translation. As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue. Its perpetual use made it from the instant of its appearance the standard of our language. But for the moment its literary effect was less than its social. The power of the book over the mass of Englishmen showed itself in a thousand superficial ways, and in none

more conspicuously than in the influence it exerted on ordinary speech. The mass of picturesque allusion and illustration which we borrow from a thousand books our fathers were forced to borrow from one; and the borrowing was the easier and the more natural that the range of the Hebrew literature fitted it for the expression of every phase of feeling. When Spenser poured forth his warmest love notes in the *Epithalamion,* he adopted the very words of the Psalmist as he bade the gates open for the entrance of his bride.

Cromwell's Battle Cry

"When Cromwell saw the mists break over the hills of Dunbar, he hailed the sunburst with the cry of David: 'Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered. Like as the sun riseth, so shalt thou drive them away.' Even to common minds this familiarity with grand poetic imagery in prophet and apocalypse gave a loftiness and ardor of expression, that with all its tendency to exaggeration and bombast we may prefer to the slipshod vulgarisms of the shopkeeper of to-day.

"But far greater than its effect on

literature or social phrase was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits; but it was impossible for her to silence or tune the great preachers of justice, and mercy, and truth, who spoke from the book which she had again opened for her people. The whole moral effect which is produced nowadays by the religious newspaper, the tract, the essay, the lecture, the missionary report, the sermon, was then produced by the Bible alone. And its effect in this way, however dispassionately we examine it, was simply amazing. The whole temper of the nation was changed.

The First Democracy

"A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class. Literature reflected the general tendency of the time. 'Theology rules there,' said Grotius of England. The study of the country gentleman pointed towards theology as much as the scholar. The whole nation became, in fact, a Church. We must not, indeed, picture the

early Puritan as a gloomy fanatic. The lighter and more elegant sides of the Elizabethan culture harmonized well enough with the temper of the Puritan gentleman. Serious as was his temper in graver matters, the young squire was fond of hawking, and piqued himself on his skill in dancing and fence. If he was 'diligent in his examination of the Scriptures,' he 'had a great love for music, and often diverted himself with the viol.' A taste for music, indeed, seems to have been common in the graver homes of the time.

"Their common call, their common brotherhood in Christ, annihilated in the mind of the Puritans that overpowering sense of social distinctions which characterized the age of Elizabeth. The meanest peasant felt himself ennobled as a child of God. The proudest noble recognized a spiritual equality in the poorest saint."

The Secret of Greatness

Mr. J. L. Paton, a well-known educationalist, says: "If men read trash they

think trash, and if they think trash they become trash." The English people in the reign of Elizabeth did not read trash. They read a great book—*the* book. Therefore, they thought great thoughts and became a great people. The rise of the English dates from that period. As coal feeds a fire the Bible has fed the spirit of our race. The foundations of the United States were laid by Bible readers—the Pilgrim Fathers. And to-day there is a British Commonwealth of Nations and a great English-speaking Republic, which, together, dominate the world. How? By the sword? No! By cleverness? No! They dominate by the force of character, and their character has been built up by three centuries of close communion with the great thoughts and principles of the Bible. The civilization and Christianization of the world depend to-day upon America and the British Commonwealth of Nations—English-speaking peoples who have risen to greatness through contact with the mighty spirit which surges through the Bible.

The Fall of Germany

We have seen the German nation rise to greatness through the Bible-teaching of the Reformation, and then fall into ruin by turning away from the Bible to Nietzsche and accepting "Darwin's science of the animal efficient in its own interest" as "the science of civilization itself." Nietzsche parodied the Sermon on the Mount, and taught its opposite. To quote Benjamin Kidd, "Nietzsche gave Germany the doctrine of Darwin's efficient animal in the voice of his superman. Bernhardi and the military textbooks in due time gave Germany the doctrine of the superman translated into the national policy of the superstate aiming at world power." The religious interpretation of history as contained in the Bible was rejected, and Darwin's scientific interpretation of the history of animal life was applied to the things of the soul. Instead of walking humbly with their God as the Bible teaches, the Germans loved to shout: "Life exists for Me. All the dim æons behind have toiled to produce Me. I am the Fittest. Give Me My Rights.

Stand clear of My way. I want and I will have." Like Nebuchadnezzar, they lifted up their pride to the heavens and fell into the abyss. For nations, as for individuals, there is only one absolutely safe guide-book here below, and that is the Bible. I am convinced that the rise of the English was due to the regenerating power of the Bible, which they read and absorbed; that there will be no racial decay while we give it the place in our lives which our fathers gave it, but that any serious decline in Bible reading and the influence of Bible principles will be followed by the decline and fall of the English-speaking peoples.

IV

THE INSPIRING EFFECT OF THE BIBLE ON ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE Bible has done more to create English literature than any other book. Before it was translated into English, England had practically no prose writings and little poetry. After it, came Shakespeare (who alludes to it constantly), John Milton, John Bunyan, and a host of others. Its influence is directly visible in nearly all our great writers down to the present day. It is acknowledged by all literary men to be "the well of English undefiled." It is the standard of English speech and writing; and the book, above all others, in which a youth ought to steep himself if he ever wishes to write the best English. It created in England that great spirit among the people out of which great literature has its rise. For supreme writers like Shake-

speare are not isolated from their fellows, but are the fine flower and most perfect expression of the spirit of their age.

Why Men Are Great

They stand on the shoulders of their countrymen, and are great because their age is great, and pours its spirit through them. We see the same law at work in the rise of Greek literature and art, and in the development of the great painting age in Italy. The Bible created a new spirit in England. Froude, the historian, attributes the greatness of the sailors in the time of Drake and the Armada to the fact that they were mostly Protestants brought up on the Bible. And historians are agreed that the greatness of Cromwell's soldiers was due to the religious convictions and increased sense of personal worth inspired in them by the Bible. Great thoughts and great acts alike spring from a great spirit, and this great spirit came through the nation's vital contact with the Bible. The uplifting influence of the Bible was perhaps most marked in Milton's time, for the whole nation was feeding its soul on it. And this is what

he says of the spirit of the age in his *Areopagitica:* "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam: purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms. What should ye do, then? Should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up, and yet springing daily, in this city? Should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel?"

The New Light

Such was the light and new spirit that the Bible had brought to England. It was the translation of the Bible that "roused

the strong man after sleep." It was in the truths the Bible had brought to light that the eagle was "kindling her undazzled eyes, and purging and unsealing her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance." There is no Milton in the land to-day, because there is no light and spirit in the nation such as he describes, and great poets can live only in great communities. It was the newly translated Bible that made the England of Milton great. Speaking of England, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Professor of English Literature at Cambridge, says: "For three centuries or so it has held rule over vast stretches of the earth's surface and many millions of strange peoples." "For three centuries or so!"

What Happened Three Centuries Ago

What happened "three centuries or so" ago? This: In 1535 "there appeared the first copy of the English Bible." (I am quoting from Froude's *History of England.*) "In this act was laid the foundation-stone on which the whole later history of England, civil as well as ecclesiastical, has been reared; and the most

minute incidents became interesting, connected with an event of so mighty moment." That was 388 years ago, when Shakespeare was 29. Fifty years later (from 1583 to 1603, especially) the Bible was spreading into every home, and crowds were gathering in St. Paul's to hear it read. In 1611 the Authorized Version of the Bible was issued. That is a little over three hundred years ago. In 1599 Cromwell was born; Milton in 1608; and Bunyan in 1628. All three were born and nurtured in an England filled with the light and fire of the Bible, and they became the very expression of the spirit of their time. Milton's mind was dyed through with the Bible, as we see in *Paradise Lost* and in all his prose works. He is the organ voice of England, and stands but a little below Shakespeare. Wordsworth says of him:

> Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour;
> England hath need of thee. . . .
> Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
> So didst thou travel on life's common way
> In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
> The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

That was the kind of poet a Bible-loving age produced.

Poetry—and Faith

But what poet can this secularistic half-believing age produce? Milton is supreme in the English language as a writer of the sublime style; and Bunyan, who belonged to the same age, is supreme in the simple style. And both are the children of the revolution produced by the translation of the Bible. Quiller-Couch, in *On the Art of Reading,* says: "Masterpieces will serve us as prophylactics of taste, even from childhood; and will help us, further, to interpret the common mind of civilization. But they have a third and yet nobler use. They teach us to lift our own souls. . . . The real battle for English lies in our elementary schools, and in the learning of our elementary teachers. It is there that the foundation of a sound national teaching in English will have to be laid, as it is there that a wrong trend will lead to incurable issues. For the poor child has no choice of schools." The Bible as the masterpiece of the English language should be taught

to every child; for, to quote again John Richard Green, "The English Version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue—the standard of our language."

V

BUNYAN AND THE BIBLE

LOCKHART, in his biography of Sir Walter Scott, tells how in his last hours he "desired to be drawn into the library, and placed by the central window, that he might look upon the Tweed. Here he expressed a wish that I should read to him, and when I asked from what book, he said: 'Need you ask? There is but one.'" What Sir Walter Scott did not know about literature was not worth knowing; and his last testimony was that there is but one supreme book, and that is the Bible. Out of that book has come most of our great English literature. If we had never known the Bible, our literature would have been of an entirely different kind. Perhaps its direct effect is most marked in Bunyan. The Bible dyed Milton's mind through and through, as his works show, but the clas-

sics of Rome and Greece mixed their colors with it. But Bunyan was a poor tinker, and knew no other book. He was literally "a man of one book." But this book was a library in itself, and made him the greatest writer of simple English in our language. Robert Blatchford, the agnostic, is one of the best writers of simple English in our own time, and it was his style that made him such a power in the land twenty years ago. Had his matter been equal to his style, he would have retained his influence, and become one of the immortals; but he was handicapped in youth, and had little chance to study deeply until he left the army.

Where Men Learn to Write

Where did he get his style? Was it from the Rationalist Press? No, no one ever got it there. He got it where all must get it who wish to write sweet, simple, beautiful, nervous English. He got it from John Bunyan, the Bible, and the Church of England Prayer Book. The Litany in the Prayer Book especially appeals to him—as it must to all who have any taste at all in English—and he places

"Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon," from the Bible, among his favorite "bed books." But it is Bunyan who, more than anyone else, has given him his simple and limpid style. He says, in *My Favorite Books,* "I fear I cannot approach the *Pilgrim's Progress* with the same critical calm with which I approached *Urn Burial.* I was turned of forty years, and somewhat of a writer and student myself, when Sir Thomas Browne was introduced to me, but Bunyan was the friend and teacher of my childhood; the *Pilgrim's Progress* was my first book. It was for me one of the books to be 'chewed and digested,' and in my tenth year I knew it almost all by heart.

"I used at times, when the baby was restless, to ride it upon my knee, and recite to it passages out of Bunyan, or sing to it the verses—they are but feeble poetry—from that wonderful book, to tunes of my own composing. . . .

"Criticism of Bunyan's work is beyond me. I might as well try to criticize the Lord's Prayer, or 'The House that Jack Built,' or 'Annie Laurie.' Bunyan's English is tinker's, and soldier's, and preach-

er's English. It is the English of the Bible, of the Ironsides, and of the village green. Therefore, all who write for the people shall do well to study Bunyan."

Lord Macaulay on Bunyan

In this Blatchford had practised what he preached. Macaulay, in his essay on Bunyan, says: "We are not afraid to say, that though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two minds (both Puritans) which possessed the imaginative faculty in a very eminent degree. One of these minds produced the *Paradise Lost,* the other the *Pilgrim's Progress.* The style of Bunyan is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. . . . Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, the dialect of plain work-

ing men, was perfectly sufficient. There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language, no book which shows so well how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all that it has borrowed." Dr. Johnson and Robert Louis Stevenson had like praise for Bunyan.

Where Bunyan Got His Style

Now where did Bunyan get his wonderful style? How came an illiterate tinker of three hundred years ago to write an English masterpiece that has been translated into nearly every language in the world? I have no hesitation in saying that, but for the English Version of the Bible, Bunyan would never have written a single word in our literature. Bunyan says, in *Grace Abounding:* "I fell into company with one poor man, who, as I thought, did talk pleasantly of the Scriptures and of Religion; wherefore, liking what he said, I betook me to my Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading, especially with the historical part thereof;

for as for Paul's Epistles and such-like scriptures, I could not away with them." A few pages further on he says—and the change in taste is instructive—"And now I began to look into the Bible with new eyes; and especially the Epistles of the Apostle St. Paul were sweet and pleasant to me." It was this reading that made Bunyan an author. He himself says: "My Bible and Concordance are my only library in my writings."

Green and Hallam on Bunyan's Bible English

Green, in his *Short History of England,* says of *Pilgrim's Progess:* "In no book do we see more clearly the new imaginative force which had been given to the common life of Englishmen by their study of the Bible. Its English is the simplest and homeliest English which has ever been used by any great English writer; but it is the English of the Bible. So completely has the Bible become Bunyan's life, that one feels its phrases as the natural expression of his thoughts. He has lived in the Bible till its words have become his own." Hallam, another historian, says:

"There is scarcely a circumstance or metaphor in the Old Testament which does not find a place bodily and literally in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and this has made Bunyan's imagination appear more creative than it really is." Coleridge said that the *Pilgrim's Progress* was "incomparably the best compendium of Gospel truth ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired." The Bible made Bunyan; and it has moulded all literature since his time. It is the voice of God

> Who at sundry times, in manners many
> Spake to the fathers, and is speaking still.

VI

HEINE AND THE BIBLE

HEINE was a philosopher of such originality of thought and outspokenness of speech that almost all his writings were mutilated by the German censor. He was also "the first in rank and the last in time of the Romantic poets of Germany." In the Preface to the second edition of *Religion and Philosophy in Germany,* one of his most important works, he says: "At that time (when the book was first published) I was yet well and hearty; I was in the zenith of my prime, and as arrogant as Nebuchadnezzar before his downfall. Alas! a few years later, a physical and spiritual change occurred. How often since then have I mused over the history of that Babylonian king who thought himself a god, but who was miserably hurled from the summit of his self-conceit, and compelled to crawl on

the earth like a beast, and to eat grass (probably it was only salad). This legend is contained in the grand and magnificent Book of Daniel; and I recommend all godless, self-worshippers to lay it devoutly to heart. There are, in fact, in the Bible many other beautiful and wonderful narrations, well deserving their consideration; for instance, the story of the forbidden fruit in Paradise, and the serpent which already six thousand years before Hegel's birth promulgated the whole Hegelian philosophy. . . .

The "Plain Old Book"

"I owe my enlightenment simply to the reading of a book! One book! Yes, it is a plain old book, as modest as nature, and as simple; a book that appears as work-day-like and as unpretentious as the sun that warms, as the bread that nourishes us; a book that looks on us as kindly and benignly as an old grandmother, who, with her dear tremulous lips, and spectacles on nose, reads in it daily: this book is briefly called *the* book—the Bible. With good reason it is also called the Holy Scriptures: he that has lost his God can find

Him again in this book, and towards him who has never known Him it wafts the breath of the divine word. The Jews who are connoisseurs of precious things, well knew what they were about when, at the burning of the second temple, they left in the lurch the gold and silver sacrificial vessels, the candlesticks and lamps, and even the richly jewelled breast-plate of the high-priest, to rescue only the Bible." Later, Heine calls the Bible, "this holiest book of humanity." From 1848 to his death in 1856 Heine was the victim of a painful paralysis which kept him to his "mattress-grave." "He lay," says an English visitor in 1855, "on a pile of mattresses, his body wasted so that it seemed no bigger than a child under the sheet which covered him—his eyes closed, and the face altogether like the most painful and wasted 'Ecce Homo' ever painted by some old German painter." In these painful circumstances he wrote: "Alas! fame once sweet as sugared pineapple and flattery, has for a long time been nauseous to me; it tastes as bitter to me now as wormwood. What does it avail me that at banquets my health is pledged in the choicest

wines and drunk from golden goblets, when I, myself, severed from all that makes life pleasant, may only wet my lips with an insipid potion? What does it avail me that enthusiastic youths and maidens crown my marble bust with laurel-wreaths, if meanwhile the shrivelled fingers of an aged nurse press a blister of Spanish flies behind the ears of my actual body?

"The Aristophanes of Heaven"

"Alas! the irony of God weighs heavily upon me! the great Author of the universe, the Aristophanes of Heaven, wished to show the petty, earthly, so-called German Aristophanes that his mightiest sarcasms are but feeble banter compared with His, and how immeasurably he excels me in humor and in colossal wit." He had at this time been kept to his bed for six years. "He went out for the last time," says Havelock Ellis, "in May, 1848. Half blind and half lame, he slowly made his way out of the streets, filled with the noise of revolution, into the silent Louvre, to the shrine dedicated to 'the goddess of beauty, our dear lady of Milo.' There he sat long

at her feet; he was bidding farewell to his old gods; he had become reconciled to the religion of sorrow; tears streamed from his eyes, and she looked down at him, compassionate but helpless: 'Dost thou not see, then, that I have no arms, and cannot help thee?' " During the weary years that followed he seems to have drawn real comfort from the Bible, for, five years after his pathetic farewell to La Venus de Milo, he writes from his "mattress-grave": "You see that I, who in the past was wont to quote Homer, now quote the Bible, like Uncle Tom. In truth I owe it much. It again awoke in me the religious feeling; and this new birth of religious emotion suffices for the poet, for he can dispense far more easily than other mortals with positive religious dogmas. . . .

The Failure of Philosophies

"It is strange! during my whole life I have been strolling through the various festive halls of philosophy, I have participated in all the orgies of the intellect, I have coquetted with every possible system, without being satisfied; and now, after all this, I suddenly find myself on

the same platform whereon stands Uncle Tom. That platform is the Bible, and I kneel by the side of my dusky brother in faith with the same devotion. What humiliation! With all my learning, I have got no farther than the poor ignorant negro who can hardly spell! It is even true that poor Uncle Tom appears to see in the holy book more profound things than I, who am not yet quite clear, especially in regard to the second part." Later on, in his *Confessions,* Heine says: "At an earlier period when philosophy possessed for me a paramount interest, I prized Protestantism only for its services in winning freedom of thought. Now, in my later and more mature days, when the religious feeling again surges up in me, and the shipwrecked metaphysician clings fast to the Bible—now I chiefly honor Protestantism for its services in the discovery and propagation of the Bible. The Jews rescued the Bible from the bankruptcy of the Roman empire, and preserved the precious volume intact during all the tumults of the migration of races, until Protestantism came to seek it and translated it into the language of the land

and spread it broadcast over the whole world.

"The Kingdom of the Spirit"

"This extensive circulation of the Bible has produced the most beneficent fruits, and continues to do so to this very day. . . . While by tricks of trade, smuggling, and commerce the British gain footholds in many lands, with them they bring the Bible, that grand democracy wherein each man shall not only be king in his own house, but also bishop. They are demanding, they are founding, the great kingdom of the spirit, the kingdom of the religious emotions, and the love of humanity, of purity, of true morality, which cannot be taught by dogmatic formulas, but by parable and example, such as are contained in that beautiful, sacred, educational book for young and old—the Bible."

VII

THE BIBLE AND LITERARY STYLE

HEINE, in his *Religion and Philosophy of Germany,* says: "I have said that we gained freedom of thought through Luther. But he gave us not only freedom of movement, but also the means of movement; to the thought he gave words. He created the German language. This he did by his translation of the Bible. In fact, the Divine author of that book seems to have known, as well as we others, that the choice of a translator is by no means a matter of indifference; and so He Himself selected His translator, and bestowed on him the wonderful gift to translate from a language which was dead and already buried, into another language that as yet did not exist. Luther's Bible is an enduring spring of rejuvenation for our language. All the expressions and phrases contained therein are

German, and are still in use by writers. As this book is in the hands of even the poorest people, they require no special learned education in order to be able to express themselves in literary forms." It has been the work of the Bible to do for many races what it has done for the Germans. Wherever the missionary goes he translates the Bible into the native language, and often it is the first book the race possesses in its own tongue. It thus becomes the standard of the language. When the book is printed the missionary teaches the people to read it, and the education of the race begins.

The Bible a Portable University

The Bible is to them a portable university. Later on, as a result of this education by the Bible, schools and colleges will be built, and a national literature will slowly come into existence. What Luther did for Germany by means of the Bible, the missionaries of to-day are doing for native races in all the lands where they labor. What happened in Germany, happened also in England. The historian, J. R. Green, says: "As a mere literary

monument, the English Version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue. Its perpetual use made it from the instant of its appearance the standard of our language." Heine's description of the effect of Luther's Bible on the German language may be used, without the alteration of a word, to describe the effect of the English Bible on the English language. For centuries the Bible was the only school the working people of England possessed. Its influence alone made Bunyan, the Bedford tinker, a master in English literature. And to it, as "the noblest example of the English tongue" our poets and writers have ever turned. The works of all our greatest writers, from Spenser to the present day, bear its imprint, as all who know the Bible may see for themselves. Burns declared that he never heard the words "Let us worship God" without a feeling of awe overtaking him, for they reminded him of the daily act of worship conducted by his father in the home. In *The Cotter's Saturday Night* he describes a scene which took place regularly in his own cot-

tage and in scores of thousands throughout Scotland and England.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, once his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare:
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says with solemn air.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage,
With Amalek's ungracious progeny!
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or, Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped,
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

The Bible the Nursing Mother of Poets

Were it not that the minds of the Scottish peasants, generation after generation, had been saturated with the Bible—"the

standard of our language," it may well be doubted whether Burns would have found it possible to express the poetry that was in him. But, "as this book," again to quote Heine, "is in the hands of even the poorest people, they require no special learned education in order to be able to express themselves in literary forms." It is true that, since the days of Knox, Scotland has had a superior educational system and that all her sons have been given a chance to enter on the path of learning; but, as the educational system sprang from the Reformation, so the Reformation sprang from the re-discovery and propagation of the Bible.

The Bible, as the nursing mother of poets, is clearly seen in the life of James Hogg. Rowland E. Prothero says, in *The Psalms in Human Life:* "On the Psalms, as his mother repeated them to him in the metrical version of Scotland, James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, nursed his childish imagination, and mingled with them her tales of giants, kelpies, brownies, and other aerial creations of the fairy world. Before he knew his letters he could say Psalm 122, and, as he grew older, he

learned by heart the greater part of the Psalter. The Bible was, in fact, the herd-boy's only book." The writer says: "Of Walter Scott's familiarity with the Psalms his novels give abundant evidence, and scraps of the Psalms were among the last words which his friends could distinguish from his lips."

Byron and the Bible

That Byron, "half a Scot by birth," was familiar with the Bible, we see from the *Hebrew Melodies* written during his honeymoon, and by many passages in his poems. Despite his waywardness, he gained from his nurse a love and knowledge of the Bible, which never forsook him. While still a boy, he committed to memory many of the Psalms, the 1st and 23rd among others. Ruskin, who, in his earlier days, took Byron as a master of style, speaks of the Bible, as "the library of Europe, for that, observe, is the real meaning, in its first power, of the word *Bible.* Not book, merely; but 'Bibliotheca,' Treasury of Books." In *Praeterita* Ruskin tells how his early familiarity with the Bible preserved his literary

taste from deterioration and his style from becoming superficial and formal. He says: "Walter Scott and Pope's Homer were reading of my own election, but my mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year: and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature.

The Bible, Ruskin's Standard of Literary Taste

"From Walter Scott's novels I might easily, as I grew older, have fallen to other people's novels; and Pope might, perhaps, have led me to take Johnson's English, or Gibbon's, as types of language; but, once knowing the 32nd of Deuteronomy, the 119th Psalm, the 15th of 1st Corinthians, the Sermon on the Mount, and most of the Apocalypse, every syllable by heart, and having always a way of thinking with my-

self what words meant, it was not possible for me, even in the foolishest times of youth, to write entirely superficial or formal English." If a boy wishes to become a great writer or orator he cannot do better than follow Ruskin's example, and commit large portions of the Bible to memory, for the simple and stately language of the Bible will then become the standard by which, through life, he will test all he reads, writes, or speaks. In *Our Fathers Have Told Us* Ruskin says: "Indeed, the Psalter alone, which practically was the service book of the Church for many ages, contains merely in the first half of it the sum of personal and social wisdom. The 1st, 8th, 12th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 23rd, and 24th Psalms, well learned and believed, are enough for all personal guidance; the 48th, 72nd, and 75th, have in them the law and the prophecy of all righteous government; and every real triumph of natural science is anticipated in the 104th.

"For the contents of the entire Bible, consider what other group of historic and didactic literature has a range comparable to it. There are:

1. The stories of the Fall and of the Flood, the grandest human traditions founded on a true horror of sin.

2. The story of the Patriarchs, of which the effective truth is visible to this day in the policy of the Jewish and Arab races.

3. The story of Moses, with the results of that tradition in the moral law of all the civilized world.

4. The story of the Kings—virtually that of all Kinghood in David, and of all Philosophy in Solomon!—culminating in the Psalms and Proverbs, with the still more close and practical wisdom of Ecclesiasticus and the Son of Sirach.

5. The story of the Prophets—virtually that of the deepest mystery, tragedy, and permanent fate, of national existence.

6. The story of Christ.

7. The moral law of St. John, and his closing Apocalypse of its fulfillment.

The Bible Unmatched By Any Other Literature

"Think, if you can match that table of contents in any other—I do not say 'book' but 'literature.' Think, so far as it is

possible for any of us—either adversary or defender of the faith—to extricate his intelligence from the habit and the association of moral sentiment based upon the Bible, what literature could have taken its place, or fulfilled its function, though every library in the world had remained unravaged, and every teacher's truest words had been written down?

"I am no despiser of profane literature. So far from it, that I believe no interpretations of Greek religion have ever been so affectionate, none of Roman religion so reverent, as those which will be found at the base of my art teaching, and current through the entire body of my works. But it was from the Bible that I learned the symbols of Homer, and the faith of Horace." It has been said that "On the Psalms is founded much of Ruskin's æsthetic teaching. The guiding principle of *Modern Painters* is that glad submission to the Divine law which is the keynote of Psalm 119." Of this Psalm, Ruskin says: "It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother thus taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and

which was, to my child's mind, chiefly repulsive—the 119th Psalm—has now become of all the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the law of God."

VIII

THE AUTHOR'S LAMP AND LIGHT

THE Bible, which has given Christian names to hundreds of millions of Western children in the course of the ages, has poured its light through the window of every study in Europe and America where books have been written. It has been impossible for men to shut out the direct or indirect rays of its light. Even atheists and enemies of the book have been indebted to it, for they have been born into a civilization and lived under a public opinion and code of morals founded upon the Bible. Every book they picked up reflects its light like a diamond. Every institution bears its impress. The Bible has so permeated civilized life that there is no way of escape from its influence. It is as impossible to empty the world of the influence of the Bible as to empty the Atlantic of water.

As there is no escape from the light of the sun—not even at night, for it is reflected from the moon—so there is no escape from the Bible. Over the portal of every library the words, from Ruskin's favorite Psalm—"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"—should be engraved; for the books within give out the light they absorbed from the Bible as coals give out the light and warmth they derived from the sun.

Addison's Lamp

To Joseph Addison, the famous essayist of the *Spectator* papers, the Bible was as a lamp on his study table, and he wrote in its light. In the *Spectator* of July 26, 1712, he paraphrased the 23rd Psalm, and on August 23rd of the same year he rendered the 19th Psalm into a metrical version. This version, "The spacious firmament on high," has been sung by millions who have never read a page of his famous essays. His version of the 31st Psalm, "When all thy mercies, O my God," is known to all English-speaking peoples. Cardinal Newman, whose hymns "Lead, Kindly Light" and "Praise to the Holiest

in the Height'' are sung in all the churches, was one of the supreme masters of the English tongue. His *Apologia* is a masterpiece which all who desire to cultivate literary taste should read. His familiarity with the Bible is evident in all he writes, and not least in the *Dream of Gerontius,* wherein he imagines the souls of the departed singing the 90th Psalm. Charles Kingsley, another master of language, and the antagonist in reply to whom Newman's *Apologia* was written, found in the Bible his source of strength. The 76th Psalm, from which John Endicott's party took the name ''Salem'' for their first settlement in America, was the favorite Psalm of Kingsley and expresses the spirit that breathes through *Westward Ho!* and his other books. Robert Louis Stevenson, whose position as a ''lord of language'' is questioned by none, says: ''The next book, in order of time, to influence me, was the New Testament, and in particular the Gospel according to St. Matthew. I believe it would startle and move anyone if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly

like a book, not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible. Anyone would then be able to see in it those truths which we are all courteously supposed to know and all modestly refrain from applying."

Handing on the Torch

W. T. Stead, who went down in the *Titanic,* was one of the most picturesque journalists of his time. He was a man in whom the subconscious life, which makes for greatness, was highly developed. Three weeks before he was drowned he was staying with a friend of mine, a few minutes' walk from where I am writing, and one morning he told his host that in a dream his boy who was, as we say, dead, had said to him: "I think you are going to come to us very soon; we don't want you to come yet, but I think you will." Stead was more than a journalist; he was a hero and a prophet. I owe him a debt which I acknowledged to him before he died. He had issued a series of Penny Poets, and I spent a penny on Burns. No one ever got more for a thousand pounds than I got for that penny. The book changed my life. Burns came back from

the grave. He took me by the hand and led me forth to see the life of nature and the life of men. He touched my eyes with his fingers and I beheld the joy and pathos, the love and beauty, the hardship and heroism of everyday life. For weeks I glanced at his poems, in spare moments, while at work, and committed them to memory. At night I sang his songs to atrocious tunes of my own which provoked a chorus of protests from those who had gone to bed and could see no pleasure in "a night with Burns." It was my intellectual awakening. Until then I had never read a line of verse with understanding or delight. Poetry was more prosy to me than prose, but when Burns began to speak it I sat at his feet entranced and let the world go by. It is because Stead introduced me to Burns that I linger over his name. When I wrote to Stead, he understood my experience, for, in his youth, James Russell Lowell had done for him what Burns did for me. In estimating the influences which led him to take up "the cause of the disinherited everywhere," he puts the Bible first, Lowell second, and Victor Hugo third. Stead's path was

often dark, and he was put in prison for publishing his chivalrous articles, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,* but the Bible was "a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path." He says: "While the Bible of the race is being written, from age to age, the Bible—as the Old and New Testament are rightly described—remains the most valuable of all the revelations of the Divine will. It is not one book, but many books, some of which have influenced me deeply; others have not influenced me at all.

A Great Editor's Testimony

"The first time I felt the influence of the Bible was when I first went to a boarding school. I was unspeakably miserable and forlorn. I was only twelve, and had never been away from home before. It was then I discovered the consolatory influence of many of the Psalms. Take them all round, the Psalms are probably the best reading in the world when you are hard-hit and ready to perish. After I left school, Proverbs influenced me most; and I remember when I was first offered an

editorship, reading all the Proverbs relating to kings as affording the best advice I was likely to get anywhere as to the right discharge of editorial duties. When I was busy with active direct work among the ignorant and poor, the story of Moses' troubles with the Jews in the wilderness was most helpful. Later, when, from 1876 to 1878, no one knew when he went to bed but that by morning Lord Beaconsfield would have plunged the Empire into war, the Hebrew prophets formed my Bible. In 1885 it was the story of the Evangelists. If I had to single out any one chapter which I am conscious of having influenced me most, I should say the first of Joshua, with its oft-repeated exhortation to be strong and to be very courageous; and if I had to single out any particular verses, it would be those which were taught me when a boy, and which I long afterwards saw on the wall of General Gordon's room at Southampton: 'Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths!'"

Omar Khayyam and Ecclesiastes

Edward FitzGerald was a man of a different type from Stead, but he had a perfect mastery of English. And his English has the simplicity of the Bible. His lines:

> And ere to bed
> Go we, go we,
> Down on the ashes
> We kneel on the knee,
> Praying together,

are as simple and beautiful as a child. And his stanza:

> Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
> How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
> How oft hereafter rising look for us
> Through this same Garden—and for *one* in vain,

wets the eyes like the words of Ecclesiastes: "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: but if a man live many years and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many." FitzGerald's English was Bible English, as the above quotations show, and to FitzGerald the Bible was "no strange land." For his tombstone FitzGerald chose the text: "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." Ecclesi-

astes, of whom the translator of *The Rubáiyát* reminds us, is a favorite with Sir Rider Haggard, the writer of *King Solomon's Mines.* He says: "And there is one immortal work that moves me still more—a work that utters all the world's yearning anguish and disillusionment in one sorrow-laden and bitter cry, and whose stately music thrills like the voice of pines heard in the darkness of a midnight gale; and that is the book of Ecclesiastes." John Stuart Blackie, whose wholesome writings had a powerful influence on the men of his time, declares: "To the Bible I am indebted for the greatest blessing that can happen to a young man at his first launch out of boyhood into youth, viz., the grip which it gave me of the grand significance of human life, and of the possibilities of human nature when true to its highest inspirations. I was not more than fifteen years old when I was moved to adopt the ideal ethics of the Gospel as my test of sentiment and my standard of conduct; and to this I adhered steadily thenceforward, just as a young seaman would stick to his compass and to his chart, and a young

pedestrian to his map of an unknown country." It was the Bible which taught him "the grand significance of human life," and without that knowledge no man can write what it is worth any man's while to read.

IX

THE BIBLE'S TRANSMISSION OF LIFE

WHAT Hamilton Wright Mabie calls "the literature of power" is undying, because it is the manifold experiences of the spirit distilled and stored up in letters. Like harvests of grapes, successive generations of men are trodden in the wine-press of life and the emotions produced in this process are fermented by thought, and drained off into books. These books, formed into libraries, are like wayside inns at which the pilgrim, traveling from the cradle to the grave, may take his choice, and, if he but drink deeply enough, go on his way refreshed. Wordsworth has defined poetry as "emotion remembered in tranquillity." All great and wise books may be defined as "emotion remembered in tranquillity" and refined by the more or less unconscious process of thought. Milton asserts

that to write a great poem the poet's life must be a great poem. In other words, literature grows out of life. To write deeply a man must live deeply. A book is the measure of its author's inner life. The failure and triumph of Burns and the vices and virtues of Byron are clearly revealed in their poems. All true writing is conscious, or unconscious, autobiography. It is a self-revelation, and no doubt the author sometimes regrets having taken the world into his confidence. He was really talking to himself when the printing press took up his words and gave them to the world. Deliberate autobiographies are doubtful as histories, but essays and poems are unconscious autobiography, and therefore reliable. No one should write whose dominant desire is to keep his inner life a secret, for his secret will leak out through his words as blood leaks through a wound no matter how carefully bandaged.

The Spiritual History of the Puritans

Milton's inner life was as great as his greatest poem. By the side of Cromwell

he had worked till he was blind, trying to build an earthly paradise, but in his old age he saw their Puritan Paradise destroyed; Cromwell's body dug up and his head placed on a pike for the mob to gaze at; and blind, defeated, and forsaken, Milton retired to a humble home to write his *Paradise Lost.* All that life meant to Milton, and all there was in it of sweetness and bitterness, was distilled into *Paradise Lost.* There you will find his life's attar of roses and its wormwood. Yea, more than that you will find. Because Milton was a poet, and had all the sensitiveness and imaginative sympathy of a poet, you will find, to a large extent, all that life meant to the Puritans as a people; for, as rivers attract and absorb into themselves all the streams that come near them, so great writers absorb the experiences of the men whose lives touch theirs. Milton and Bunyan lived greatly, the Puritans lived greatly, and as a consequence you have, in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* two great books containing all that is vital and indestructible in the Puritan era.

These two books contain the storm and stress, the hopes and fears, the ideals and failures of the age of the Puritans "remembered in tranquillity." The bodies of the Puritans lie mouldering in the grave, but, in these two books, their souls go marching on. These two books are the arms with which, like Samson, the Puritan, while dying, pulled down the pillars upon which the old world was built. The Bible begets life because it was begotten of life. It deals with the vital experiences common to all men, ancient or modern, Jews or Gentiles, whether East or West of Suez.

The Terms on Which Life is Granted

It knows the terms on which man's short lease of life is granted, and teaches us how to live within the terms to the best advantage. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. . . . If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou

wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." Those are the terms upon which life is granted to men, and the Bible bases its philosophy of life upon them. And any philosophy that ignores them is built on shifting sand, and cannot endure through the ages as the Bible has endured. The young Heine, with his Hellenic temperament, wrote: "Life is all too laughably sweet, and the world too delightfully bewildered; it is a dream of an intoxicated god. . . . Life is the greatest good and death the worst evil. . . . Red life pulses in my veins, earth yields beneath my feet, in the glow of love I embrace trees and statues, and they live in my embrace. Every instant is to me an eternity, and I need no priest to promise me a second life. The great pulsation of nature beats too in my breast, and when I carol aloud I am answered by a thousand-fold echo. I hear a thousand nightingales. Spring has sent them to awaken Earth from her morning slumber, and Earth trembles with ecstasy; her flowers are hymns, which she sings in inspiration to the sun—the sun moves far too slowly; I would fain lash on his steeds that they

might advance more rapidly." Alas! Heine has forgotten the terms of life and the advice of Ecclesiastes: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them." But when, in 1848, paralysis came and stretched him on his 'mattress-grave,' he bade good-bye to his Greek gods and pagan philosophies and took to the Bible, "like Uncle Tom."

Greek Youths and Hebrew Men

After five years of hopeless suffering, he says in his *Confessions:* "My prejudice in favor of Hellas has declined. I see now that the Greeks were only beautiful youths, but that the Jews were always men, strong, unyielding men." While a man lives lightly, sporting like a butterfly in the sun, he may have little use for the Bible, but when the day darkens and night comes on he takes out his father's Bible to be "a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path." The Bible, from the first chapter to the last, holds on with both hands to the eternal in human life; to the things that

forever recur. Isaac thinks his life will take a road untrodden by men before, but soon he finds himself pitching "his tent in the valley of Gerar," where his father had been in days long past. Then, "Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them . . . and found there a well of spring water." There you have all human history in a nutshell. When Isaac stands where his father stood—as he must some day—he opens the wells his father dug, and when he has drunk of the "springing water" he calls them "after the names by which his father had called them." Gerar is the valley of life. Joy like gentle summer rain, sorrow and pain like blinding snow-storms, cloudbursts and wild pitiless rains have beaten upon its face and sunk into its depths, but, "after many days," these waters have come springing forth, pure and cool, as "emotion remembered in tranquillity," and have formed a well that we

call the Bible, as our fathers did, and which will never run dry.

The Tears of One Age Form a Well for Another

The men and women of the Bible "passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools." Out of the rain of tears God has taken the salt, and now it makes a well of spring water. Men "wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way.... He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation." Life forces us to pitch our tents where the Hebrew fathers pitched theirs, and we drink out of the well they dug, for there is none other so deep. In all the great experiences of life men, who know where to look for help, turn to the Bible. After my

father's death I was looking through his note-book, when I came upon this passage from Isaiah: "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour;" and I saw that he had been drinking at the old well.

The Discoverer of Chloroform

Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, when he needed something for the soul, to help him to bear the pain and sorrow of life, turned to his "Mother's Psalm" (the 20th), "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble . . . and strengthen thee out of Zion." After one of the battles of the Somme, one of the lads of my regiment was found dead in a shell-hole, and holding in his pulseless hand a Bible open at the 23rd Psalm. He was just a simple "Tommy." But Sir William Ham-

ilton was a great philosopher and a man of immense learning, yet, when he lay dying he strengthened himself by repeating from the same Psalm, "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me," for, since Abel, death has been the same ordeal to all men. When the two Scottish Covenanters, Isabel Alison and Marion Harvie, were hanged at Edinburgh in 1681, Marion—a girl of twenty—said, as they stood on the scaffold, "Come, Isabel, let us sing the 23rd Psalm." How fundamental are the experiences with which the Bible deals is seen from the 5th verse of the 31st Psalm. In this verse, David cries: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit." On the cross Jesus utters the same words (Luke 23:46). They are echoed again by Stephen as he dies under a shower of stones, and, as we pass down the centuries, we hear them from the dying lips of Christopher Columbus, the Emperor Charles V, Renwick and other martyred Covenanters, John Hus, Martin Luther and Thomas More. John Wesley and Oliver Cromwell, when dying, join hands across the centuries with the Psalmist, and repeat the words of the 46th

Psalm: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

The Bible Faces All the Facts

The Bible faces all the facts of life. It never, like the Christian Scientist, puts on rose-colored spectacles, nor refuses, like the ostrich, to let its eye dwell on what is unpleasant. It looks on the whole of life and stands up to it. Omar Khayyam sees the vanity of human wishes and watches the fleetness of human life as does Ecclesiastes, but he runs away from life to the tavern, where he may get drunk and forget. The Bible, on the other hand, sees that our life, however fleeting, runs its course under the shadow of the Eternal God. "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations," it cries. And Ecclesiastes, after declaring that "all is vanity," says: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." The Bible teaches man to face the "whole matter" and stand up to life. Thus, it

"giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might it increaseth strength." It transmits life and inspires the literature that springs from life.

X

ORATORS AND THE BIBLE

JOHN BRIGHT was one of the greatest orators England has produced. His style was at once sublime and simple. Where he got his style we know, for he has told us. He got it from the Bible, and from John Milton, who, in turn, was tremendously influenced by the Bible. Milton and the Bible were the two books in which Bright lived. He read them because he loved them—the only true way of reading—and because he wished to cultivate a taste for the highest form of speech. Gladstone, another great orator, put the Bible first in his library, and drank deeply of its pure streams, and after it placed Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Dante, and Bishop Butler, the last three being themselves great students of the sacred Scriptures. St. Augustine ascribed his conversion to a passage of St. Paul which he read in his younger days. Gladstone did

not write many books; but one of the books he did write was *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture.*

Lloyd George

Lloyd George is, I consider, the greatest orator of our day. I heard him on his native heath before he became famous, and I was charmed with his witchery of words. I have seldom heard, or read, a speech of his in which he did not spontaneously, and as the most natural way of expressing his ideas, make allusions to the Bible. Some of his best speeches closed with a quotation from the Scriptures. He seems to have steeped himself in it as a youth. In fact, he may be described as "a man of one book." His references to other books are few indeed. His general knowledge of literature seems to be small, but he knows the Bible, and this is, in itself, a literary education, and has given his oratory wings.

The first speech I heard Mr. Lloyd George give made a deep impression on me. I went away convinced that he was a great patriot and a deeply religious man. During one of the blackest weeks of the

War, he was present at the service in a little country chapel, attended by his host. At the close he went into the vestry to thank the preacher. He seemed deeply moved, and declared that the text, and the sermon based on it, had come to him as a word of encouragement from God. Evidently the impression remained with him, for, on his return to London, he found time to write a letter of gratitude to the minister.

Ramsay Macdonald

At the Scarborough Labor Congress I heard a great speech delivered by Ramsay Macdonald to the members of the Independent Labor Party, and it was steeped in the spirit of the Scriptures, and contained several allusions to the Bible.

C. H. Spurgeon

No other man has ever spoken to such multitudes as C. H. Spurgeon, and had so great a circulation of his printed sermons during his lifetime. His style was pure, simple, and varied. It expressed perfectly every shade of thought and feeling. Where did he get this mastery of language?

There is no room for doubt in the matter. He loved the Bible, and deliberately adopted it as the standard of perfect English. He preached in Bible English just as Bunyan wrote in Bible English.

Dr. Joseph Parker

With the death of Spurgeon, Dr. Parker became king of the English pulpit. Neither man had been to college. The Bible was their college. Like Spurgeon, Parker went to the Bible to learn how to speak. Every holiday he read it through from cover to cover. He steeped his mind in it, and its great language leapt from his tongue. He says: "I am not ashamed to say that the Bible has infinitely beyond all other books influenced my life, my thought, and my purpose." Henry Ward Beecher, too, the great American preacher, lived in the Bible and moulded his style on it. His language was Bible English. Only half-educated people are impressed with long and unusual words.

Simplicity the Highest Art

The highest art is always simple, but simplicity is the most difficult thing in the

world to reach. From a mountain top the view of the world is simple, but the difficulty lies in getting up to the top of the mountain. Simplicity is an art that conceals art. That is why many are blind to the beauty of Bible English. They have not studied literature deeply enough. They are deceived by its simplicity. Deep waters look shallow when they are clear and limpid. Jump into them, and you must swim or drown. Bible English seems so simple that any schoolgirl could write it, but try; and you will realize that the men who gave us the English version were the lords of the English language, and have never been surpassed or even equalled. As Stopford Brooke points out, the greatest virtue in Tennyson was his simplicity, but it took a lifetime's study to reach it. What so simple and what so perfect as *Crossing the Bar?*

Savonarola

Savonarola, the great Dominican preacher, must have been one of the foremost orators of all time, for by the sceptre of his eloquence he ruled Florence for five years as an absolute mon-

arch. A study of his life will show that he found in the Scriptures the source of his power. While a youth, he told his father that his constant prayer was, "Show thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto thee" (Ps. 143:8). His martyrdom is the proof that he did not shrink from the way that was shown to him. He had power over men because he lived deeply, and he was able to live deeply because he fed himself on the heavenly manna of the Scriptures. The Scriptures made him strong to preach and strong to suffer. In prison he was put to the torture to make him recant. His torturers broke his left arm and tore the shoulder-bone from its socket. In his agony he found comfort in writing meditations on the 31st and 51st Psalms. He writes: "Bowed at the feet of the Lord, my eyes bathed with tears, I cried, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid? Though a host of men were set against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid; and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in Him.'" In this

confidence he slept like a child on the night before his execution and was seen smiling in his sleep.

Edward Irving

One of the greatest orators of the nineteenth century was Edward Irving, founder of the Irvingites, the disappointed lover of Jane Welsh and the friend of Thomas Carlyle. For a time he had London at his feet fascinated with his oratory. "Hour after hour" crowds listened to his sermons. Yet the end of his life was pathetic in the extreme. His mental balance became disturbed, and his teaching was considered to be at variance with that of his Church. The Church took action against him and he was forbidden to administer the sacraments. He continued on his way, believing in his mission, but his heart was broken, and Death kindly opened her arms to him and gave him shelter.

"When," says Rowland E. Prothero, "other comforts had failed and fame had fled, he clung still to his Bible, and made the Psalms his constant companions. 'How in the night seasons,' he writes, 'the Psalms have been my consolations against

the faintings of flesh and spirit!' For a few weeks he was able to preach, though at forty-two his gaunt, gigantic frame bore all the marks of age and weakness. His face was wasted, his hair white, his voice broken, his eyes restless and unquiet. As November drew to its close his feebleness increased, till it was evident that his life was rapidly passing away. His mind began to wander. Those who watched at the bedside could not understand the broken utterances spoken in an unknown tongue by his faltering voice. But at last it was found that he was repeating to himself, in Hebrew, Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my Shepherd.' It was with something like its old power that the dying voice swelled as it uttered the glorious conviction, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' The last articulate words that fell from his lips were, 'If I die, I die unto the Lord.' And with these he passed away at midnight on December 7, 1834.'' It is when the tornado has passed, and left the building a wreck, that we see exposed the mighty and unbroken pillars and foundations upon which it rested

while it gave shelter to men; and it is amid the wreckage of Irving's life that we see the source of his power and understand his sway over the hearts of men. Irving lived deeply. He drank at the sacred springs of the Bible. When, at last, the years of famine came and all other streams dried up and he was alone in the wilderness, he, like Elijah, still found one stream flowing—the stream which had nourished him from his youth up. Men rejected his theories as unbalanced, but they felt the power of his spirit. Deep called unto deep.

XI

SIX BOOKS THAT MADE LINCOLN PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

SOME time ago I stood on the Battlefield of Gettysburg, where the turning point in the Civil War was reached. It was there that Lincoln made an immortal speech in commemoration of the heroic dead. Another spoke before him and made a rousing speech. It is forgotten. Lincoln spoke, and the people were disappointed. The speech was extremely short, simple, and quietly spoken. There seemed nothing in it. Lincoln had been outshone by the eloquent speaker before him. So this was the great Lincoln! In the presence of all those newly filled graves he had failed! The people had asked him for bread to sustain their sinking spirits, and he had given them a stone. Father Abraham had failed his people.

He had proved unequal to his reputation. He had justified the saying of a more clever but smaller man that, "Lincoln would make a good President if he could have some one to write his speeches for him." Lincoln's speech was printed. It did not take up much room in the newspapers. Men of literary taste and insight read it. They read it again and again. Then they gave their judgment, and pronounced the speech to be one of the greatest ever given by man to men. Those who had heard the speech had been deceived by its simplicity. Its delicacy, profundity, and perfection had escaped them. A generation has passed, and now all men know that, whatever happens to other statesmen's speeches, Lincoln's words will reverberate down the avenues of Time, while men have ears to hear and hearts to understand. They know that the Gettysburg address is a perfect pearl whose lustre will never grow dim.

The Growth of Lincoln's Greatness

During the Great War Lincoln was quoted more in England than any other man whose tongue Death had stilled. As

the tragedy of the War deepened, the figure of Lincoln loomed out of the darkness and shone with a light that never was on sea or land. In the deep darkness through which they were passing, Englishmen saw the greatness of Lincoln as they had never seen it before. As the cathedral at Lincoln towers above the houses on a stormy night, so he towered above ordinary men and seemed as English as our own cathedral. We listened to his voice as we listen to the cathedral bells of Lincoln, and it seemed to come from as far above us. Where did Lincoln get his deep understanding of the processes of life and his perfect mastery of the English tongue? He got these things in his father's log cabin out in the wilderness. The boy was father to the man. Lincoln grew greater daily. As you study his life, you can almost see him growing. The growth was steady and continuous, "unhasting and unresting" to the last hour of his life. To find the soil which nourished his ever-growing personality and gave it the power of expression, you must turn to his boyhood. All his schooling he computes to have covered no more than twelve months.

It is therefore obvious that his mastery of English did not come from the school. Where did he get it? He got it from his books. What were his books? Lord Charnwood, in his *Life of Abraham Lincoln,* says: "Having learned to read, he had the following books within his reach: The Bible, *Æsop's Fables, Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress,* a *History of the United States,* and Weems' *Life of Washington.* These books he did read, and read again, and pondered, not with any dreamy or purely intellectual interest, but like one who desires the weapon of learning for practical ends, and desires also to have patterns of what life should be. There is some advantage merely in being driven to make the most of few books; great advantage in having one's choice restricted by circumstances to good books."

The Tendencies of Lincoln's Life

Study the tendencies of Lincoln's life in the light of the tendencies of these six books, and you will perhaps agree that they made him President of the United States. His one biography is of the first

President—himself a lover of the Bible. This book would give direction to Lincoln's ambition, and it is the only direction his ambition ever seems to have taken. His one history is of the United States—a nation founded by the Bible-reading Puritans and it is noteworthy that nearly all his speeches are broad-based on the constitutional history of his country. *Æsop's Fables* were suitable nourishment for a man who was to be famous for his humor, common sense, and short stories conveying moral lessons. Lonely, self-reliant Robinson Crusoe, with a servant in man Friday, but no equal for companionship, will stand as a portrait for Lincoln himself. Lincoln was as isolated as Crusoe, and as self-reliant. He had men about him whom he loved and by whom he was beloved, but they were his servants rather than his companions, for he had no equal and walked alone. *Pilgrim's Progress* was equally suitable for one who had to pass through such spiritual conflicts as Lincoln. What fights he had with Giant Despair, what imprisonments in Doubting Castle, what arguments with Worldly Wiseman, what Lions to

pass between, and what a dark crossing of the River of Death, before Stanton could say: "Now he belongs to the ages." And then the Bible! Rightly it stands first in Lord Charnwood's list of six. The Bible is the standard of the English language—"a well of English undefiled," and Lincoln was to be one of the great masters of the English tongue. Of the six books with which Lincoln was imprisoned in the wilderness four are masterpieces, and these taught him to speak a language as simple as their own. *Æsop's Fables* are Greek stories belonging to the sixth century before Christ and translated into simple English.

The Homeliness of Lincoln and Bunyan

Pilgrim's Progress is written in the homeliest English our literature has produced. It owes its origin directly and entirely to the English translation of the Bible which Bunyan knew almost by heart. *Robinson Crusoe* also is written in Bible English. Defoe was born soon after the great outburst of Bible reading. He entered upon life in 1661, thirty-three years after Bunyan. In his youth he had the

idea of becoming a dissenting minister, and his writings carry on the literary impulse given by the translation of the Bible into English. Lincoln was nurtured on the Bible and the Puritan masterpieces which it produced. His supremacy as an orator lies in the fact that, more than any other man of his time, he spoke in the purest and simplest Bible English. It is instructive to read his speeches in chronological order and observe how the Bible grows upon him as the days darken and responsibilities grow heavier. His boyish reading in the Bible had sunk into his nature as rain sinks into the soil, and, for a time, it seemed almost forgotten, but when sorrow had broken open the deeps of his soul, it poured itself forth as a sweet spring, and gave him strength to bear the heat and burden of the day.

A Mind Saturated With the Bible

"It astonished the self-improving young Herndon," says Lord Charnwood, "that the serious books Lincoln read were few, and that he seldom seemed to read the whole of them—though with the Bible, Shakespeare, and to a less extent Burns,

he saturated his mind." That Lincoln had saturated his mind with the Bible I will show by a passage chosen almost at random, from the debate with Judge Douglas: "The Judge has read from my speech in Springfield in which I say that 'a house divided against itself cannot stand.' Does the Judge say it *can* stand? I don't know whether he does or not. The Judge does not seem to be attending to me just now, but I would like to know if it is his opinion, that a house divided against itself *can stand.* If he does, then there is a question of veracity, not between him and me, but between the Judge and an authority of a somewhat higher character." There you have a quotation from the Bible placed in a setting almost as simple as the language of the Bible itself. Speaking of Lincoln's replies to Judge Douglas, Lord Charnwood says: "Passages abound in these speeches which to almost any literary taste are arresting for the simple beauty of their English, a beauty characteristic of one who had learned to reason with Euclid and learned to feel and to speak with the authors of the Bible. And in their own kind they were a classic and probably un-

surpassed achievement." When Lincoln spoke, says Mr. Choate, "he was transformed: his eye kindled, his voice rang, his face shone and seemed to light up the whole assembly. For an hour and a half he held his audience in the hollow of his hand. His style of speech and manner of delivery were severely simple. What Lowell called 'the grand simplicities of the Bible,' with which he was so familiar, were reflected in his discourse."

Lincoln's Greatest Speech

The second inaugural of Lincoln reads almost like a passage from the Bible, so full of the words and spirit of Scripture is it. I will quote a part of it. "Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. . . . Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us 'judge not, that we be not judged.' The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been

answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offences, which in the providence of God must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may soon pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn with the sword; as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice towards none, with char-

ity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

In his presidential candidature speech, Lincoln said: "I am nothing, but truth is everything; I know that I am right because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God." Lord Charnwood says: "He (Lincoln) loved the Bible and knew it intimately—he is said also by the way to have stored in his memory a large number of hymns." In the year before his death Lincoln wrote to Speed: "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book upon reason that you can and the balance upon faith, and you will live and die a better man."

XII

THE MASTER LIGHT OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN NATURE

THE vital nature of the Bible is shown in its treatment of David. A conventional writer would have described David as a hypocrite, despite the difficulty of accounting for his Psalms on that basis; or else he would have taken hold of the other horn of the dilemma and would have whitewashed David by suppressing the evidence against him. The Bible does not call David a hypocrite, but "the man according to God's own heart." And on the other hand, it neither suppresses the account of his sins nor glosses over them. It gives them in all their blackness. Unlike conventional writers, the Bible pierces through the outward covering of man to the heart.

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;

O'er which from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weigh'd not as his work, yet swell'd the man's amount.

Thoughts hardly to be pack'd
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me—
This was I worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

The Biblical writer saw the strength of David's temptations, and the vigor and persistency with which he fought them before, tired and beaten, he was overthrown. He also saw how deep and sincere was David's repentance, and how quickly he was on his feet again to fight the enemy which, in an evil hour, had worsted him. He saw David's ideals and accomplishments, as well as his faults and failures.

Carlyle on David

In *Heroes and Hero-Worship,* Carlyle says: "David's life and history, as written for us in those Psalms of his, I con-

sider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, down as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended; ever, with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose, begun anew." Whatever character the Bible portrays, whether St. John, St. Peter, St. Paul, Judas (who was meant to have saint before his name), Ananias the liar, Simon the Sorcerer, Saul, Balaam, Lot or Elijah, it reveals him to the marrow of his bones. He is put under the X-rays and shown to the world as he is and not merely as he appears. This is apparent in the portraits of Jacob and Esau. At first sight most of us would prefer Esau to Jacob. Jacob seems despicable in his youth, and Esau not a bad sort. But the Bible probes deeper. It sees the fatal flaw in Esau—he is profane; and the saving grace in Jacob—he has reverence. Esau never did anything so mean as Jacob, but neither did he ever do anything so noble. Isaac preferred Esau, but Isaac

was blind, as fathers often are. The mother saw through her children, as mothers do, and chose Jacob. She saw his possibilities and took long views. Isaac only thought of the immediate—the venison that Esau brought him. Esau never saw any ladder of angels such as Jacob saw at Bethel. He could not, for he had no eyes in his soul. He lacked reverence. He was a profane person. Nor could Esau look on a woman and love her as Jacob loved Rachel, when he met her next day, with his face shining and the light of the vision still in his eyes. Esau was capable of passion, but not of a lifelong love such as Jacob gave Rachel, and which made "seven years seem unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Esau was a "profane person," and incapable of the love which is passion transformed by reverence into worshipping affection. Rebekah, being a woman, wife and mother, saw the difference between the two characters, and put her trust in Jacob.

The Ascent of a Soul

It is only in youth that Jacob shows up badly, but "Youth shows but half; see all;

the last of life for which the first was made." Jacob throws away his meanness as a moth-fretted garment, and becomes the favorite of God and man. Jacob climbs steadily up the golden ladder he saw at Bethel, but Esau never rises above the earth. He is of the earth earthy. Because in this way, the Bible reveals the soul within the body, it is the best book in the world for those who wish to understand human nature or move men by the spoken or written word. There is an illuminating passage in Psalm 103. It says: "He (God) made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." The crowd only saw God's "acts," they could not understand His character, purposes, and "ways." But Moses understood God's "ways," character, motives, and was able to relate the isolated "acts" one to another and grasp the general plan which God was working out. It is ever so. The crowd only sees the actions of a personality, not the motives which inspire and relate them; but the true leader of men understands the motives and ways of men, and is never taken unawares by their actions. He may be disappointed by men, as

Jesus was by Judas, but he is not deceived. One of the supreme merits of the Bible for the literary man is that it teaches him the lore of the human heart. It instructs him both in the ways of God and in the ways of men, and it is impossible for him to write great books (as distinct from merely clever ones), without this two-fold knowledge.

The Choice of a Wife

A man who knows human nature, may or may not be wise in his choice of a wife for himself, but he will almost certainly be wise in choosing a wife for his friend. Try the Bible by this test. The servant of Abraham had been sent into Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac; and, whatever the impressions of that country our soldiers may have brought back with them, I am sure Isaac always loved to speak "that blessed word—Mesopotamia." The servant reaches the well at "the time women go out to draw water. And he said: 'O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. And let it come to pass, that the damsel to

whom I shall say, "Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink"; and she shall say, "Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also"; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac." What are the servant's tests of character for one who is to be a good wife? Not beauty, for beauty without a kind heart is a mirage of the desert, at which no husband ever yet slaked the thirst of his soul; though beauty covering a noble soul is a gift of God, and Rebekah "was very fair to look upon." Not wealth, for a wife's wealth, if she has not a loving spirit, may be a bone of contention and a source of wounded pride in the man, and he does not need wealth with her, for he either has enough for both or can make enough. What then are the tests by which he will judge her character and worth as a woman?

Insight Into Character

He will judge her first, by her attitude towards a man who is old, a stranger, and a servant; and, second, by her treatment of dumb animals. Her attitude to the aged will decide her worth as a wife; and her

attitude to dumb animals her worth as a mother. If she is kind to the old man and gives him drink when he asks, and if, out of the goodness of her heart she offers to give drink to the camels without being asked, she, and no other, is the woman who will make a good wife. Rebekah does not know she is under examination, but she passes the test. "She said moreover unto him: 'We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.' And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord." The question now was, would she go to be Isaac's bride? The parents were willing, but was Rebekah? "And they called Rebekah and said unto her: 'Wilt thou go with this man?'" Probably her brother thought she would be taken by surprise, and would want time to think it over. He thought that she was not in the secret. But it was no secret to Rebekah. She had known for hours. How? God knows! Every woman, of Rebekah's femininity, knows all that is of any consequence about the question of her own marriage. The man when he proposes is timid, because he thinks it will come as a surprise and shock to her; but she knew

he was going to propose to her long before he knew it himself. She is aware, however, that he does not know that she knew, and so she blushes and says, "It's so sudden"—and, if she delays her answer, it is not because she is in any doubt. It is only to tease him and keep him in doubt, so that he will be the more happy and self-congratulatory when she answers "Yes." As, however, Rebekah was proposed to by proxy, there was no need to delay her answer. She just bent her head, and was still for a moment; listening to her own heart, and thinking perhaps of all that her maiden days had been to her, and of the far country where an unknown lover was "meditating in the fields" and waiting for her. Then commending herself to God and the love of this man, she looked up, "And she said, 'I will go.' "

A Woman's Reason

She gave no reason for her decision. A woman never does, or, if she does, she gives the wrong one. I hold that the Bible's account of the marriage proposed to Rebekah is unsurpassed by any writer, as a revelation of the heart and character

of a woman. It is condensed into few words and needs thoughtful reading, but the Bible is not like a sloppy novelist who takes four hundred pages to say what can be said in four by one who knows his business. There is a novel, for any man who has imagination, in two verses of Genesis: "Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender-eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured. And Jacob loved Rachel." Poor "tender-eyed Leah," loving Jacob, but forced on him by her father's fraud, and having to live as his wife by the side of Rachel!

The Moulders of Men

The Bible always portrays women as the moulders of men. The good woman is an inspirer and the bad woman a temptress. The woman who has personality is never a neutral in the affairs of men, though she often wears neutral colors to intervene more effectively. To have wise heads on young shoulders, young men should study the Bible. "Man that is born of a woman"

think of the women of the Bible—Eve, Sarah, Hagar, Hannah, the Witch of Endor, Rachel, Job's wife, Jephthah's daughter, Ruth, Miriam, the "great woman" of Shunem, Rahab, Jezebel, Herodias, Mary Magdalene, Martha, Mary of Bethany, Pilate's wife, and Dorcas! Truly they may sing: "I am Woman and glory and beauty, I mystery, terror and doubt." Hall Caine says that in the Bible he has found the germ of every novel he has written. In poetry we have Milton's *Samson Agonistes,* Tom Hood's *Ruth,* and Byron's *Hebrew Melodies.* They represent but a small part of the literature directly suggested by Bible characters and incidents. The human nature of the Bible is the very stuff of which literature is made. Shakespeare, who worshipped in the parish church at Stratford-on-Avon and lies buried in its chancel, would be the first, because the greatest student of human nature, to acknowledge the supremacy of the Bible, not only as a revelation of God but as a revelation of man. In the Bible is One who "knew all men, and needed not that any

should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." In comparison with Him, even the incomparable Shakespeare is but

> An infant crying in the night:
> An infant crying for the light:
> And with no language but a cry.

Printed in the United States of America